

is not good—destroying American jobs, contributing to inflation, and strengthening the geopolitical position of our geopolitical rivals. The administration's actions are directly leading to higher gas and utility prices.

There is a way out of the inflation, but it is not empty virtue-signaling. It is not putting American workers out of jobs. It is to restart American energy production, hold lease sales in the Gulf of Mexico, and get American energy in our country back on track, recreating the jobs that have been destroyed, and, by the way, increasing a greater ability to export to other countries around the world, helping to lower global greenhouse gas emissions.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. President, by now we are all very familiar with the toll that COVID-19 has taken on the American people. If there is cause for encouragement coming from all of this, it is that our collective experience has helped to destigmatize mental health problems.

The down side is that now we tend to look at everything through the lens of the pandemic. But the fact of the matter is that for millions of Americans, their private battles with mental health began well before March of 2020.

It is from that perspective that I want to examine the Wall Street Journal's truly excellent ongoing investigation into Facebook's refusal to address the serious, and at times threatening, failings of their platforms.

On September 14, the Journal published an article revealing that Facebook, Inc., executives know that their popular Instagram photo-sharing program is toxic—toxic—especially for young women and girls.

They know for a fact that 32 percent of teen girls said that, when they felt bad about their bodies, Instagram made them feel even worse.

They knew that Instagram makes body image issues worse for one in three girls. They knew that teens blame Instagram for increases in the rate of anxiety and depression. How did they know all of this? Because they, Facebook, had done their own research.

In 2019 and 2020, Facebook's in-house analysts performed a series of deep dives into teen use of Instagram that reveals that "aspects of Instagram exacerbate each other to create a perfect storm." This is their awareness. That "perfect storm" that they mention manifests itself in the minds of teenagers in the form of intense social pressure, addiction, body image issues, eating disorders, anxiety, depression, and

suicidal thoughts. This multibillion-dollar company is dragging their young users to Hell, and they are doing it on behalf of a fantasy.

Much of the problem has to do with the fact that, by its very nature, Instagram forces its users to confront the unattainable. Facebook's researchers found that young users who spend their day scrolling past filtered faces and lavish lifestyles can spiral into a so-called "social comparison journey" that mimics the grief cycle. Sixty-eight percent of teen girls and 40 percent of boys experience this when they use Instagram. This is their research—their research. Sixty-eight percent of teen girls and 40 percent of teen boys experience that grief cycle.

Yes. Heartbreaking, infuriating, and guess what—it gets even worse. The internal research also shows that Facebook execs at the highest levels were in on the scheme to use these traumatized young users to pull members of their households into Instagram. Younger family members were of particular interest.

This reporting is sunshine on a particularly disgusting aspect of Facebook's strategy to shape the world in their image.

Facebook often touts their compliance with COPPA and other child protection standards as proof of their commitment to online safety. Oh, but if it were only so. But the Wall Street Journal reports show that Facebook has actual knowledge that they are collecting personal information online from kids under 13 years of age. These are children. They are suffering. But in the eyes of Facebook, they are the product. They are the product. They are the product that Facebook is using to get data so that they make more money. It is sickening.

All of this and more was revealed to me and my staff by a very brave and well-informed whistleblower from within Facebook. I have been working closely with my colleague Senator BLUMENTHAL to bring this information to light, and I thank him and his staff for being excellent advocates on behalf of young people and teenagers.

On October 5, Senator BLUMENTHAL—Chairman BLUMENTHAL—and I will host a hearing in the Commerce Consumer Protection, Product Safety, and Data Security Subcommittee where the whistleblower will offer an insider account of Facebook's total lack of governance and the growth-focused tunnel vision that has caused the company's leadership to ignore everything they know about the real world.

At this point, I want to emphasize a few important points we can extrapolate from what we know thus far.

Facebook's internal research revealed at the very least a strong correlation between use of their platforms and some forms of deteriorating mental health in kids and teens. But here is the larger issue: Even if Facebook didn't find proof of a causal link, it is unreasonable to assume that a com-

pany as large and successful as Facebook would ignore the social environment in which their young users live and scroll.

If you accept this general assertion, which I hold is reasonable, then you must also accept that Mark Zuckerberg and the rest of Facebook's top executives were very well aware of the real-world context behind all of that research, and the context will make you sick.

Between 2009 and 2019, the percentage of high school students who experienced "persistent feelings of sadness or hopelessness" increased by more than 10 percent. The percentage of high school students who seriously considered attempting suicide increased by 5 percent. Numbers regarding suicide plans and suicide attempts also trended in the wrong direction. And even less severe mental health crises can lead to risky sexual behavior, drug use, truancy, delinquency.

This is all no secret. It is publicly available information compiled by the CDC, accessible by anyone capable of executing a Google search.

It is getting harder for our kids and grandkids to make it through the day. They haven't even had a chance to live yet, and already they are experiencing hopelessness and despair. They feel so terribly about themselves that they would rather die than live another day.

Facebook has evidence that their platform facilitates these mental health spirals for young users. Yet they focused on how to trick them into thinking that scrolling through content that makes them miserable is somehow healthy and normal behavior.

Our children are not all right, and I am willing to state for the record that the people pushing success buttons at Facebook—they really do not care.

On September 21, the New York Times published an expose on the company's frankly shocking efforts to rehabilitate its image by promoting pro-Facebook content into user news feeds. By all accounts, this reporting backed the company into a corner. They were caught redhanded manipulating the flow of information, which is a charge that in other contexts has drawn fire from activists, politicians, and even Facebook itself.

In response to the well-earned backlash that Facebook received, Mark Zuckerberg chose to avoid accountability and instead made a joke about an anecdote the Times reporters included regarding a video he had posted of himself cruising around on a glorified surfboard. That is the sort of reaction you see from a person who feels that they are invincible. When they feel like they are so rich and powerful and so totally in control of their own destiny that they are the master of the universe, that no one can touch them, that is what you get.

In light of all we have seen in the past from this company and all that we have learned so far from the whistleblower, I think it is time to adjust Mr.

Zuckerberg's thinking. Accountability—yes, indeed. There is bipartisan agreement that it is time for accountability to come, and I sincerely hope that Mr. Zuckerberg and the rest of his Facebook colleagues are prepared for what is coming.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

ABORTION

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, this morning, the Senate Judiciary Committee had a hearing to discuss two of our Democratic colleagues' biggest headaches: the Supreme Court of the United States and State laws that protect the right to life.

This wasn't the first time we have seen an attack on both waged by Members of the Senate. Last year, the majority leader, Senator SCHUMER, walked across the street to the Supreme Court and threatened two Supreme Court Justices by name based on an abortion case that they were considering.

Sadly, it seems that our Democratic colleagues have simply given up when it comes to protecting innocent life. In 2020, February 2020, the Senate voted on a bill that would outlaw elective abortions after 20 weeks, when science tells us that a fetus can actually feel pain. Had this bill become law, it would have put U.S. domestic policy in line with that of most of the rest of the world.

Unfortunately, we happen to be in a small category, including North Korea and communist China, when it comes to the ability to get an abortion well into the period of gestation, including up to late-term abortions. As it stands today, the United States is currently one of only seven countries to allow elective abortions after 20 weeks. As I said, those seven countries include the Communist Party China and North Korea. But our Democratic colleagues filibustered that bill too.

Then came one more opportunity to protect the most vulnerable among us. The Senate voted on legislation requiring doctors to provide lifesaving care to infants who survive abortions, just like any other newborn child would receive. That sounds like common sense, right? Well, if you ask the American people, they say yes. More than three-quarters of the American people, when it comes to polling, said they support providing medical treatment for babies who survive abortions. But there are no Federal laws requiring healthcare providers to care for these children just as they would any other infant in their care. And, yes, you guessed it—Democrats blocked that bill too.

The attack on innocent life has been years in the making, but we have never seen anything quite like the latest endeavor that has come from the House of Representatives. The so-called Women's Health Protection Act is actually "NANCY PELOSI's Abortion Protection Act."

This isn't just about messaging. The Senate version of the bill is cospon-

sored by all but two of our Democratic colleagues. Clearly, the provisions included in this bill don't represent the beliefs of just some small subset of the Democratic Party. Apparently, it is mainstream within the Democratic Party.

But it is clear that this is a no-holds-barred attack on the right to life. One of the most outrageous and unprecedented aspects of the bill is it limits State laws limiting abortion even after viability. This goes far beyond where the Supreme Court went in *Roe v. Wade*. It also undermines another landmark abortion case, *Planned Parenthood v. Casey*. In *Casey*, the Supreme Court abandoned the trimester framework of *Roe*, replacing it with a viability standard to determine a State law's constitutionality. Even the author of *Roe v. Wade* and of *Casey* agreed that this viability standard was largely arbitrary. But this decision came in 1992, when a baby was considered viable after 23 or 24 weeks. But the marvels of modern medicine continue to challenge this estimate. Last June, a baby was born at 21 weeks and 2 days, and this past summer, he celebrated his first birthday.

The extreme legislation attacking the right to life coming out of the House and now embraced by Senate Democrats would undercut the Supreme Court's ruling in *Casey v. Planned Parenthood* and would invalidate State laws that limit abortions after 20 weeks, which is now the consensus period of viability.

A number of States have passed laws to restrict access for different gestational periods—for example, in Massachusetts and Nevada, for example, abortions are restricted after 24 weeks. In California, Washington, and Illinois—they are among the many States that restrict abortions after viability. But the Democratic proposal is so extreme, it would invalidate the laws passed in each of these blue States.

If this proposal, the Pelosi abortion bill, became law, it would allow healthcare providers to perform abortions at any point so long as it is done to preserve the mother's health. This actually undermines the decision of the Supreme Court of the United States that said it is constitutional to limit so-called partial birth abortions as a barbaric practice that does not have constitutional protection.

But the provision that would allow abortion at any point in the pregnancy so long as it is done to preserve the mother's health—that doesn't mean the pregnancy actually threatens the life of the mother. Let's be clear on that point. If a single healthcare provider determines that the birth of the baby would impact on the mother's mental health, an abortion would be legal at any point in the pregnancy up to birth.

This is way out of step with where most Americans are. A poll this last summer found that 65 percent of Americans believe that abortion should be

illegal during the second trimester, the second 3-month period of pregnancy. An abortion opposition, I should say, to a third-trimester abortion is even stronger. These are the so-called late-term abortions where the fetus is fully formed and even viable outside of the mother's womb. Eighty percent of Americans oppose third-trimester abortions but not Pelosi's abortion act, embraced by all but two of the Democrats here in the U.S. Senate.

The American people clearly do not want abortion laws that put us in the same league as China and North Korea—two of the world's most aggressive human rights abusers. Until 2016, China had a strict one-child policy. Families who didn't comply with that policy could be fined, lose their jobs, and the baby would even be the subject of a forced abortion. And it became common in China, as a result of this limitation on pregnancy, for families to prefer a son and undergo gender-selection abortions. If you are pregnant with a female child, well, abortion is fair game because they preferred to use abortion as a means to select the gender of their child.

Democrats' legislation doesn't simply remain silent on gender-selective abortions; it goes so far as to prohibit States from outlawing abortion as a method of gender selection. Not only that, it undermines State efforts to protect unborn babies with disabilities or Down syndrome. Unborn children being killed solely on gender or disabilities is a devastating problem in other countries. We cannot allow such a grotesque practice to become mainstream here in the United States. We are better than that.

The list of atrocities included in this legislation is a long one. It requires healthcare providers who hold deep religious objections to abortion to violate their own deeply held religious beliefs and kill unborn babies. It invalidates informed consent laws, which require healthcare providers to share accurate information with their patient about the baby and whether specifically the child can feel pain. It gives the Attorney General of the United States sweeping authority to block State laws that try to protect innocent human life. So this radical proposal from the House, now embraced by all but two of our Senate Democrats, would overturn existing State laws and allow abortions on a scale our country has never seen before.

I think it is a sad commentary on the conscience of America when all but a handful of our Democratic colleagues are fighting to implement these radical policies. But we cannot and we will not stay silent at a time when our most vulnerable are being attacked in such a manner. We have a moral imperative to defend those who cannot defend themselves, born or unborn, to protect those who cannot protect themselves. Babies with heartbeats, fingerprints, taste buds—they deserve to have protection of the law too. The Declaration